

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2340

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T MOGADISCIO 1574D

LIMDIS

USCINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS PFOR ET UR US

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON GENERAL AMAN'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY
EQUIPMENT

REFERENCE: ADDIS ABABA 12337

1. SUMMARY: THIS TELEGRAM CONTAINS THOUGHTS FROM MOGADISCIO PERSPECTIVE ON: (1) SOMALI REACTION TO SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA; (2) EFFECT ON SOVIET POSITION HERE OF LIMITED SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA; AND (3) OUR ESTIMATE OF DANGER OF SOMALI ATTACK ON ETHIOPIA IN MID-75. THESE THOUGHTS OFFERED HAVING VERY MUCH IN MIND THAT DECISION ON ETHIOPIAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE WILL BE MADE LARGELY ON BASIS OF ETHIOPIAN AND INTERNAL US FACTORS. END SUMMARY.

2. INCREASED US ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA. WE BELIEVE
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THAT THERE IS LITTLE SIGNIFICANT ACTION SOMALIS WOULD

TAKE AGAINST US IN CONTEXT US-SOMALI BILATERAL RELATIONS
IN EVENT WE STEPPED UP OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO
ETHIOPIA. (OUR THINKING ON THIS POINT SPELLED OUT
IN SOME DETAIL IN MOGADISCIO 1687 OF NOV. 17, 1973.)
OF COURSE OUR ACTION WOULD--DEPENDING ON SCALE, TIMING
AND PUBLIC HANDLING OF OUR ASSISTANCE--INCREASE SOMALI
PRESSURE FOR SOVIET ARMS AND THUS GIVE SOVIETS ADDITIONAL
LEVERAGE OVER GSDR. WE DOUBT BASIC NATURE OF SOMALI-
SOVIET RELATIONSHIP WOULD CHANGE. HOWEVER, SOMALIS
MIGHT BE MORE LIKELY TO YIELD TO SOVIET PRESSURE FOR
PRIVILEGES SUCH AS SOVIET-CONTROLLED AREAS IN SOMALI
PORTS AND USE OF SOMALI AIRFIELDS FOR RECONNAISSANCE
PURPOSES--IF THEY HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO.

3. SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA. ALTHOUGH GSDR
WILL NOT RPT NOT LIKE ANY SOVIET MILITARY ASSISTANCE
TO ETHIOPIA, I BELIEVE NATURE AND VIOLENCE OF THEIR
REACTION WILL DEPEND TO CONSIDERABLE EXTENT ON SIZE
AND CHARACTER OF SUCH ASSISTANCE. FOR SOMALIS TO
"THROW SOVIETS OUT" WOULD MEAN TO GRAVELY WEAKEN
SOMALI MILITARY MACHINE AT TIME WHEN UNPREDICTABLE
DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN ETHIOPIA MIGHT AT ANY POINT GIVE
SOMALIS "GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY" TO USE THAT MILITARY
MACHINE TO TAKE OGADEN. IT WOULD LEAVE SOMALIA WITH NO
SUPER-POWER FRIEND AND ETHIOPIA WITH PERAHPS TWO. IT
WOULDS SHAKE SIAD REGIME'S INTERNAL POWER STRUCTURE.
DESPITE ALL THIS, SOMALIS IN THE (TO MY MIND UNLIKELY)
EVENT OF DRAMATIC SOVIET SHIFT TO MAJOR MILITARY
ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR ETHIOPIA MIGHT SEND SOVIETS
PACKING IN PAROXYSM OF RAGE AND FEAR. HOWEVER, I
DOUBT THEY WOULD GO SO FAR IN THE EVENT THAT ANY SOVIET
MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA WAS LIMITED IN SIZE
AND NATURE. NOR DO I BELIEVE SOVIETS WOULD FEEL SUCH
LIMITED ASSISTANCE WOULD COST THEM THEIR POSITION IN
SOMALIA. (I AM BOUND TO SAY THIS VIEW IS NOT RPT
NOT UNANIMOUSLY SHARED AMONG EMBASSY STAFF AND
MOGADISCIO 1333 GIVES A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.)

4. LIKELIHOOD OF SOMALI ATTACK ON ETHIOPIA. WE
CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT SOMALI ATTACK ON ETHIOPIA
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UNLIKELY UNLESS GSDR CONVINCED IT COULD TAKE AND HOLD
OGADEN THROUGH BRIEF AND RELATIVELY UNCONTESTED MILITARY
ACTION. SOMALIS DO NOT RPT NOT FEEL THEY ARE IN SUCH
POSITION NOW. IT IS SOMALIS' JUDGMENT ON THIS POINT,
NOT RPT NOT OAU CHAIRMANSHIP, WHICH DETERS THEM FROM
ATTACK. ATTACK IN MID-1975 NO MORE LIKELY THAN AT
PRESENT IN ABSENCE OF CHANGE IN THIS SOMALI ASSESSMENT.
ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TO SOMALIA, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED

FROM ADDIS WHERE HE SAID HE BRIEFED AFCC MEMBERS EXTENSIVELY ON SOMALI THREAT, TOLD ME THIS IS ALSO HIS VIEW AND THAT HE PRESENTED IT IN ADDIS.

5. BARRING INTERNAL ETHIOPIAN COLLAPSE OR SOME OTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, WE DO NOT THINK SOMALI ASSESSMENT WILL HAVE CHANGED BY MID-1975. WE BELIEVE THIS WILL BE THE CASE EVEN IN ABSENCE OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA OVER AND ABOVE THAT NOW PROGRAMMED. SOMALIS FEEL THEIR LOCAL SUPERIORITY IN OGADEN TO BE QUITE INSUFFICIENT IN FACE OF GREATER OVERALL ETHIOPIAN RESOURCES. FURTHERMORE, SOMALIS ARE HAVING REAL TROUBLE OPERATING THEIR SOPHISTICATED SOVIET EQUIPMENT. (ONE OF 6 IL-28'S CRASHED AT SEA SIX WEEKS AGO. ITALIAN MILITARY ATTACHE TELLS US THAT WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS ONE OF SOMALIA'S THREE OPERATIONAL MIG-21'S WAS LOST AT BAIDOA ABOUT SAME TIME AND THAT THERE ARE ONLY FOUR SOMALI PILOTS QUALIFIED EVEN FOR DAYTIME MIG-21 FLYING.) EVEN IF SOVIETS GIVE SOMALIS ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, SOMALIS' ABILITY TO MAN AND MAINTAIN IT WILL BE EXTREMELY LIMITED--AND THEY KNOW IT.

6. THUS THE KEY TO PEACE, IN MID-1975 AS NOW, REMAINS ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL SITUATION.
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